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## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.  
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1. Church matters in Latvia are dealt with by the so-called Administration of Cults. The Orthodox Church is subsidized from funds derived from the parishes in Russia proper, whereas the Lutheran and Catholic churches have to subsist only on local donations, which are very small. The Jewish religious question does not exist, and there are no synagogues in Latvia.

Soviet Policy

2. The Soviet policy towards the church is two-sided. On the one hand, the Soviets continue their teaching against the existence of God to the young, and in literature and the press. On the other hand, they display a previously unknown tolerance toward the church. Cases have even occurred when persons who have abused the church have been accused of hooliganism. This applies, however, only to the Lutheran and Orthodox churches; and there is no such tolerance toward the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup>
3. This policy of the Soviets is another method of preventing the masses of the faithful from turning against them. The church, as a whole, has lost a great deal of its influence, especially among young people and students. In the schools, it is taught that there is no God, thus destroying the faith of children who come from religious homes. When the talk is about God, the children often ask: "Where is this God?" In the press and within the Komsomol, there is a constant campaign against christenings, confirmations, and weddings in church, and those who participate in such ceremonies are regarded with special disfavor. Nevertheless, the Soviets do not hesitate to use the authority of the church for their own propaganda purposes, electing the clergy for the various peace conferences in Riga and Moscow.

The Lutheran Church

4. All of the Lutheran churches are still open, though there is a shortage of pastors. The church administration, under the leadership of the former Pastor Turis from Bauska, who is now also the Archbishop,<sup>2</sup> had organized seminaries, but there are very few people now who wish to become pastors. In the first years after the war, there were a few arrests among the clergy for connections with

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the partisans and for anti-Soviet propaganda from the pulpit, but no such arrests have been noted recently. It is not forbidden to go to church, but people do not feel safe when they go. The churches are still filled to overflowing on church festivals. The Soviet authorities are planning to rebuild, as an historical monument, the famous church of St. Peter in Riga, which was destroyed in June 1941.

The Roman Catholic Church

5. The Catholic Church in Latgale is regarded with great disfavor by the Soviets, obviously because Moscow looks upon the Vatican as its great enemy. Anti-religious propaganda among the youth of Latgale is particularly strong. Local newspapers never miss an opportunity to show up any faults in the church. The result is that the young people of Latgale are strongly atheistic. The Soviets have established a school in Aglona, which is the center of Catholicism, and they are promoting the Komsomol movement with enormous energy. Cases of persecution against Catholics are quite frequent, especially in the parishes where the clergy showed sympathy in the hunt for Communists during the German occupation.

1. Washington Comment: [redacted] prior to 50X1-HUM  
October 1950, there was no difference of attitude toward the Catholic Church.  
[redacted]

2. [redacted] Comment: Turs has previously been reported as a bishop. The title of archbishop would be unusual in the Lutheran Church.

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